

APPRECIATION

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SIR LUDWIG'S very name calls to my mind a succession of scenes which will, I think, far better than a long speech, tell of his great personality and of the links that bind me to him.

In 1948 Dr Guttman, already a paraplegist and a pilgrim of the cause, came to Paris to deliver a lecture to the World Federation of Veterans. I, who have been a tetraplegic for 3 years, attend the lecture and introduce myself to him. He is so extremely kind as to come to my house, where his visit proves most encouraging for the whole family. His was the first really competent, positive and fairly optimistic assessment of the situation. Even today, after 30 years, he will often inquire about the health of the no-longer-young tetraplegic, and repeat with a smile: 'Exactly as I had foretold!' Dear Sir Ludwig, one would survive just to please you and prove you were right.

The second scene is dated 1952. I have but recently completed the course of my medical studies and as a full-fledged doctor I am spending 2 weeks in the 'Temple' of Stoke Mandeville. Dr Guttman's dynamism and faith are an inspiration to all his staff and also to the patients. His personal authority and the influence of his unit are already considerable. These 2 weeks are for me most beneficial, especially as I am about to take charge of a treatment centre. I am much impressed by the quality of Dr Guttman's approach to this patients, never limited to one aspect of paraplegia, but always concerned with the whole man. I also appreciate his conception of conservative treatment, quite in the line of the 'primum non nocere' principle so dear to every physician.

A few years later, in 1962, Paris welcomes the first Council Meeting of the Paraplegia Society. We are seven of us under the chairmanship of Dr Guttman. The statutes are adopted; and a first publication of the journal proposed. I am nominated for a post of associate editor. I hadn't then the slightest idea of what the function consisted in and I know no more today, but I am still just as proud of it. The journal *Paraplegia* like the Society, has gone a long way in all these years and it has won the world-wide audience we all know.

The next scene takes place around 1970 at the annual symposium at Stoke Mandeville. Sir Ludwig has just gone through a fairly serious operation which would have confined many to their bed for a month or more. Not so Sir Ludwig. He is there all right. Only his chair may be a little more comfortable than usual, his contributions not quite so frequent or his remarks so full of zest. But he shares in all the work and gives both an inspiring example of brave struggle against the pathology of immobility and efficient means to overcome one's physical miseries. From that time, or thereabouts, some of us (perhaps with a slight touch of irreverence) have got into the habit of calling him 'papa', although exactly what of it refers to the image of the 'father' and what to that of the 'pope' (in Italian 'papa') none of us could tell.

The last scene is in Brussels, at a cocktail party in the unit of our friend Tricot. This time it is I who have just undergone a minor operation. Sir Ludwig comes

and sits near to me; the friend and the clinician combine in him when we compare the respective after-effects of the surgical 'aggressions' both of us have experienced. We launch into a long conversation, which is the more admirable on the part of both interlocutors, as (and there's no hiding it) my abilities in using the English language are still poorer than those of Sir Ludwig in French.

Sir Ludwig is not only the man of vision who 35 years ago initiated the crusade of paraplegia, which he has constantly gone on preaching ever since. He has also been a living example as Chief of Service, master and research worker. He can take pride in thinking of the great number of disciples who keep coming to him for advice and of the wide range of constructive activities he has inspired all over the world to serve the cause of paraplegics.